

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6627

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

SECDEF WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

CINCUSNAVEUR

USCINCEUR

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 3099

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MARR EAID EG UK

SUBJ: SUEZ CANAL CLEARANCE AND SALVAGE AGREEMENTS

REF: STATE 95789

1. DISCUSSED PROCEDURE SET FORTH REFTEL WITH UNDERSECRETARY
SISCO DURING THE LATTER'S RECENT VISIT HERE. HE AGREED THAT
WE PROCEED ALONG THOSE LINES.

2. ACCORDINGLY, I RAISED SUBJECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMY
LAST NIGHT. I WENT THROUGH IN SOME DETAIL DEPT /DOD
RATIONALE FOR WANTING WRITTEN UNDERSTANDING ON THESE
MATTERS. (I HAVE DONE SO AT LEAST THREE TIMES BEFORE.)
HE IS UNDER NO MISCONCEPTION ON THIS SCORE. HE SAID
VERY FRANKLY THAT WHILE HE APPRECIATES OUR DESIRE TO
HAVE WRITTEN EXCHANGE, WE SHOULD ALSO UNDERSTAND EGYPTIAN
SENSITIVITIES ON THIS MATTER. EGYPT IS NOT A NATO COUNTRY,
HE POINTEDLY STRESSED, AND WE ARE BREAKING NEW GROUND IN
DEVELOPING MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE PROCEDURES. HE CAUTIONED
THAT IF WE PUSH TOO HARD, THE EXCHANGE WILL HAVE TO GO TO
THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AND THIS HE FELT TO BE NEITHER IN
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OUR NOR EGYPTIAN INTEREST. WITHIN THESE PARAMETERS,

HE AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO MY EXPLORING WITH HIS LEGAL ADVISOR THE FEASIBILITY OF SUBSTITUTING FOR HIS ORIGINAL NOTE, A NEW NOTE WHICH WOULD INCORPORATE THOSE OF OUR REQUIREMENTS WHICH EGYPT IS POLITICALLY ABLE TO ACCEPT. SUCH EXPLORATION, HE STRESSED, IS WITHOUT COMMITMENT, BUT FAHMY ALSO MADE CLEAR HIS DESIRE TO TRY TO BE AS ACCOMMODATING AS CIRCUMSTANCES PERMIT.

3. I ALSO TOLD FAHMY ABOUT THE SUEZ CANAL SALVAGE AGREEMENT WHICH I WOULD SHORTLY PRESENT (STATE 96550) AND OUR DESIRE TO MAKE THE PRESENT SOFA AGREEMENT APPLICABLE TO US PERSONNEL ENGAGED IN SALVAGE WORK. AGAIN, FAHMY INDICATED AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE, SUBJECT TO HIS LEGAL ADVISOR'S VIEWS ON THE SPECIFICS OF OUR NOTE.

4. I HAVE ARRANGED WITH LEGAL ADVISOR AMBASSADOR ABDEL HAMID FOR WEDNESDAY MORNING TO EXPLORE WITH HIM (A) A POSSIBLE REVISION OF THE MINISTER'S APRIL 25 NOTE ALONG THE LINES THAT WE WOULD LIKE, AND (B) THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT FOR THE SALVAGE OPERATION. MEANWHILE, EXISTING EXCHANGE OF SOFA MEANS WE CONTINUE TO BE COVERED WHILE WE ARE TRYING TO DEVELOP A MORE SATISFACTORY TEXT.
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